

Nevada's Strategic Plan for People with Disabilities

Annual Report

July 2006

Introduction

This is our committee's third annual report. We have been honored to act as stewards for Nevada's Strategic Plan for People with Disabilities, and thank Governor Guinn for the opportunity. We are also very appreciative of the support received from the Nevada Legislature, particularly the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities, chaired by Senator Barbara Cegavske. As you will see in this report, many individuals have contributed substantively to the implementation of our Strategic Plan; it truly has been a community effort.

The Strategic Plan Accountability Committee (SPAC) was created by executive order in 2003 to hold the State accountable for the implementation of the Strategic Plan, in response to the mandates of the US Supreme Court's Olmstead Decision. We have been a very active and engaged body and have worked hard to balance our accountability role with our desire to work cooperatively with all the State and community agencies involved. The SPAC is made up of thirteen members from a diverse background of disability interests. The group meets on an as-needed basis, typically about five times per year. The SPAC is staffed by the Office of Disability Services, and most meetings are attended by representatives from the Division of Health Care Financing and Policy (Nevada Medicaid), Aging Services, Welfare, Vocational Rehabilitation, Child and Family Services, Mental Health and Developmental Services, Early Intervention and others.

Year-Three Activities

A pattern has developed, whereby the SPAC spends one year planning the Olmstead implementation process, and the next year pursuing implementation. Last year, this report primarily outlined the legislative and budgetary outcomes of the recommendations we made in 2004. This year's report will focus on several recommended actions for the Executive and Legislative branches to consider.

Since our last report, we have held six public meetings and accepted testimony on a variety of topics including Autism, Traumatic Brain Injury, Early Intervention Services, Positive Behavior Supports, Money Follows the Person, Assistive Technology, Deaf and hearing impairment issues, housing and others. Our recommendations below provide a summary of the conclusions we have drawn from that testimony and our deliberations. Minutes of our meetings are available by e-mailing Diane Randall at drandall@dhhs.nv.gov

This year, our committee elected a new chairman. Former chair, Robert Desruisseaux, was offered a position with the Division for Aging Services to develop aging and disability resource centers in Nevada. In accepting the position, it became a conflict of

Strategic Plan Accountability Committee
Annual Report- July 2006
1 of 15

interest for Mr. Desruisseaux to continue as SPAC Chair. While his leadership will be missed, the chairmanship has been very ably filled by Jack Mayes of the Nevada Disability Advocacy and Law Center. New members to the committee this year include Reggie Bennett, Executive Director of the R.A.G.E. Independent Living Program, Veronica Wilson, Executive Director of the Blind Center, and Lisa Erquiaga, Executive Director of the Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living.

Organizationally, we decided this year to assign our major issues to teams of two or three people, each of which includes a member of the SPAC and a representative from a relevant State agency. This approach was very successful in gaining buy-in from stakeholders, and in publicly demonstrating that the implementation of Nevada's Olmstead Plan is a joint effort between the State and the community. These teams presented several significant issues to the interim Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities.

We also continued to take a critical look at the Strategic Plan. Some of the plan's objectives have become obsolete and others have needed updating to reflect the current environment. This year, we also added several objectives related to services for Deaf Nevadans.

On this note, the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities appointed an advisory committee to examine several issues related to recruiting qualified Deaf education teachers, providing qualified interpreters in medical, educational and legal settings, and strengthening interpreter training programs in Nevada. The SPAC has reviewed these recommendations and gives them its full endorsement.

This year, Nevada also presented an Olmstead Conference. The event was jointly organized and funded by the Bureau of Family Health Services, the Office of Disability Services, and the Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living; an Olmstead consultant provided technical assistance. Two separate, one-day conferences were held in Las Vegas and Reno. Participants included individuals who serve people with disabilities, such as discharge planners, social workers, public and private agency management, and personal care workers; there were over 200 attendees. National and local experts presented information and strategies on a variety of topics, and made a call to action that everyone prioritize serving people with disabilities in the "most integrated setting appropriate."

Year-Four Recommendations

The SPAC has closely coordinated its work with the interim Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities, chaired by Senator Barbara Cegavske. Members of the SPAC attended all of the legislative committee's meetings and provided extensive testimony in support of the legislative committee's deliberations. The SPAC has testified on most of the following recommendations and respectfully asks that the departments, the governor and the legislature give every consideration to supporting these measures. In addition to these specific recommendations, we have continuing concerns related to the general areas of mental health services (especially for children), early intervention services, and respite.

Perhaps the most universal barrier we have encountered is a lack of data on the performance of various programs and the needs of many disability constituencies. We strongly encourage policymakers to consider the value of quality data in directing their decisions and to include a data collection component in all initiatives.

We have broken our recommendations down into three types—recommended resolutions, bills and budget initiatives—and have prioritized them according to their urgency. Of course, the mere inclusion of an item on these lists indicates a level of urgency.

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTIONS

#1 Provide Medicaid with the budget flexibility needed to shift payments between institutional and community-based settings, based upon the care choices made by service recipients.

Deleted: ** THE ITEM BELOW WAS MOVED FROM BILLS TO RESOLUTIONS AT THE SUGGESTION OF MIKE WILLDEN.

Issue Summary:

This issue is a cornerstone to the US Supreme Court's Olmstead decision. The State of Texas was able to move thousands of citizens out of nursing homes simply by enabling Medicaid dollars to be flexibly spent on either institutional or community-based services. While Nevada does not have the high levels of institutionalization that Texas had, our citizens and our State budget will still benefit from greater use of community-based options through a more sensible budget structure.

Objective 17 of the Strategic Plan suggests the State should *"develop a rider to Medicaid budgets based on the Texas model. Modify existing policy to allow a 'money follows the person' pilot for children and adults assessed to be in unnecessarily restrictive residential environments."* Furthermore, Objective 31 asks that we *"assure that funding is flexible and services and supports meet the individual needs of the child and family."*

Leadership of the Department of Health and Human Services supports the idea of removing the institutional bias in Medicaid service funding. However, they note that a lack of available case management staff could still pose a barrier to offering services to more people through Medicaid Waivers. The SPAC believes that implementing this recommendation will give the State its strongest evidence to-date that Nevada is in the process of complying with the Olmstead Decision. We request that the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities encourage DHHS, the Executive Budget Office and the Legislative Council Bureau to embrace this budget structure.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 16, 17, 31

SPAC Contact: Jon Sasser

Agency Contact: Connie Anderson

#2. Transition at least 20% of the Early Interventions Services caseload to community-based service agencies.

Issue Summary:

Since its consolidation, Nevada's Bureau of Early Intervention Services (BEIS) has struggled to provide timely and quality services to young children with disabilities. This is especially worrisome because the window of opportunity to get young children with disabilities on the right course is very small. And, those who are not properly served during the early intervention years enter our school system well behind their peers, and wind up being more costly and difficult to educate. Nevada is one of only two states that provides EIS through a state agency and clearly this model is not effective. However, we do not know for certain that providing services through private agencies will improve outcomes.

Objective 20 of the Strategic plan calls for EIS to *"assure all children (age 0-2) referred for early intervention services receive, a multidisciplinary child evaluation and family needs assessment, and an individualized family service plan (IFSP) and have their plans completed within 45 days to comply with federal law. This can be realized by expanding the number of providers certified to perform these evaluations."*

For the purpose of gathering data on the efficacy of service privatization, and to assist EIS in adequately staffing the needs of its constituents, we encourage a resolution from the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities urging the Department of Health and Human Services to transition 20% of the EIS caseload to private agencies and to have an independent evaluator gather data on the effectiveness of all EI services provided.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 20, 33, 63, 88

SPAC Contact: Karen Taycher

Agency Contact: Janelle Mulvenon

#3. Use Early Interventions Services' vacancy savings to contract with private provider agencies.

Issue Summary:

In FY06, EIS had several unfilled staff vacancies that made it difficult to fully serve their client base. In an effort to remedy the problem, EIS proposed a work program to use their vacancy savings to contract with private provider agencies. The SPAC supports this strategy and asks the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities to urge the Department of Health and Human Services to continue this practice until at least 20% of the EIS caseload is being privately served.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 20, 33, 63, 88

SPAC Contact: Karen Taycher
Agency Contact: Janelle Mulvenon

#4. Codify the “benchmarks of quality” that have been offered by the Positive Behavior Supports program related to NRS 433.5506 (Developmental Services, Child and Family Services), 388.5285 (Public Schools), 394.372 (Private Schools), and 449.782 (Medicaid Waivers, Other Facilities).

Issue Summary:

NRS prohibits aversive interventions by certain facilities and requires that facility staff be trained in positive behavior supports (PBS). However, the law does not outline what quality PBS should look like. PBS Nevada, a technical assistance and training program, has proposed certain benchmarks of quality that would give facilities some guidance in their PBS efforts. As this report is being written, PBS Nevada is holding meetings with stakeholder agencies in order to gain consensus around a final list of general standards.

Objective 39 of the Strategic Plan for People with Disabilities challenges the State to “*assure that services provided through Medicaid, Special Education, Independent Living, Maternal and Child Health, Child and Family Services and Vocational Rehabilitation will recognize, plan and fund the positive behavioral supports required by people with behavioral disorders to maintain home, community and educational independence while avoiding institutional placement.*” Objective 59 calls for assurance that “*...no person whose services are paid from state funds is removed to a more restrictive environment without specific documentation that positive behavioral supports have been fully utilized and failed to correct the presenting issues, identifying how they have been used and why additional restriction is required.*”

The SPAC asks that the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities urge the Department of Health and Human Services to continue facilitating discussions with the appropriate stakeholders, and produce a consensus list of PBS benchmarks of quality no later than January 15, 2007.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 24, 39, 59, 63, 91

SPAC Contact: Jack Mayes

Agency Contact: Don Jackson

#5. Encourage the Interagency Transition Advisory Board to continue its work and to make specific recommendations for system improvement as soon as possible.

Issue Summary:

The Interagency Transition Advisory Board (ITAB) was created by the 2005 legislature to once and for all spearhead improvement in the transition of students from school to adult life. The ITAB has met regularly during the past year, but has yet to make any recommendations for system improvement. A

major barrier to moving forward has been a lack of data in pre and post-transition systems. Nonetheless, the work of the ITAB is vital and the SPAC asks the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities to encourage the ITAB to move forward in formulating actionable recommendations.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 74, 75, 78, 79, 82

SPAC Contact: Karen Taycher

Agency Contact: Sherry Manning

#6. Establish a state Traumatic Brain Injury Registry and use the gathered data to direct service resources to the most needed areas.

Issue Summary:

Nevada has a trauma registry, which provides basic data about individuals who receive traumatic injuries, including Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). It does not, however, offer a picture over time of the needs of people with TBI or the ability of the system to meet those needs. Many states have addressed this concern through the development of a comprehensive data registry for TBI. Much of the data needed for such a registry already exists in Nevada; it simply needs to be mined and coordinated to provide needed information. The data could be used, for example, to determine whether we need a Medicaid waiver specific to the TBI population rather than an addition to the physical disability waiver.

The Office of Disability Services and the Health Division have already begun to address this recommendation by partnering in a project to establish a registry that includes not only TBI, but also Spinal Cord Injury data. The partnership will be partially funded by a federal grant won by the Office of Disability Services. The SPAC wants to ensure that this vital registry comes to fruition and asks the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities to urge the Department of Health and Human Services to have a functioning registry no later than July 1, 2007.

Comment [mew1]: Todd – I throw this in here because I believe inevitably that would be the best thing for this population. If we had a unique waiver TBI, not operated by DHCFF, this group wouldn't have to compete for "slots" and the services would be more specific to their needs. We've taken the step we have this past session only because nobody else came to the table and we believe there is a need for services and for this population to be wholly recognized.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 45, 87, 85

SPAC Contact: Jane Imboden

Agency Contact: Todd Butterworth

RECOMMENDED BILLS

#1. Amend NRS 439A to require reporting by health care facilities to a data repository of individuals at risk of entering a nursing facility, so that community-based alternatives can be explored before a person enters a facility.

Issue Summary:

The Office of Disability Services' Money Follows the Person (MFP) project, through a grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, has worked for the past three years to identify people in nursing homes who do not want to live long-term in these facilities. In cooperation with Nevada Medicaid's FOCIS program, over 300 individuals have been transitioned out of nursing homes back into the community. One important lesson learned through this process has been that, while people are waiting to leave nursing homes, they have often lost the resources to do so. They have lost their housing, furniture and other necessities while in the nursing home, making a transition back into the community very difficult.

Objective 16 in the Strategic Plan calls for the State to *"identify and transfer people in institutional care who can be served in the community, and who do not oppose such transfer, assuring appropriate discharge planning, transitional supports and targeted services coordination in the process."*

The SPAC and DHHS believe that amending Chapter 439A will address this issue preemptively. Giving consumers the option of community-based living or nursing home placement before they leave acute care, will not only be better for those wanting to live in the community, it will be a policy that is essential to the spirit of Olmstead. The reporting health care facilities should also be responsible for coordinating with the known or pending payer source (Medicaid, counties, private payers...) as well as other sources of assistance such as the Office of Disability Services, the Division for Aging Services and the Centers for Independent Living.

We request that the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities submit a bill draft request to implement a reporting repository.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 13, 16

SPAC Contact: Jon Sasser

Agency Contact: Connie Anderson

#2. Move the compliance and monitoring function of Early Intervention Services to a separate agency.

Issue Summary:

Agencies often struggle with objectively monitoring the quality of their services. For those programs with a high level of client satisfaction the issue is not often apparent but, for those with a dissatisfied client base, there becomes a need for an objective 3rd party to monitor a program. EIS is funded to undertake compliance and monitoring functions. Unfortunately, that function reports to the same person responsible for overseeing the delivery of EIS services. This conflict of interest could influence the objectivity of performance evaluations and quality assurance monitors. The SPAC asks the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities to urge the Department of

Health and Human Services to transfer the EIS compliance and monitoring function to a line of responsibility that is entirely separate from that of the EIS service delivery function.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 20, 63, 70

SPAC Contact: Karen Taycher

Agency Contact: Janelle Mulvenon

#3. Mandate that property owners receiving funding from any level of government, and who own accessible and/ or affordable units, report the availability of their affordable or accessible units to the Nevada Housing Registry.

Issue Summary:

There is an obvious lack of affordable, accessible housing in Nevada. In addition, the units that do exist are often occupied by able-bodied individuals. The most often cited reason is that property owners do not have an effective means for identifying potential tenants with disabilities. Massachusetts addressed this issue through an online housing registry that lists accessible units currently available for rent. Those looking for such units can query the website by geographical location, rental price, accessibility features and other criteria. Use of this valuable tool results in the needs of both property owners and people with disabilities being met.

Objective 67 of the Strategic Plan calls for the State to “*coordinate housing information and availability throughout the state, identify funding opportunities and promote the attraction of new housing options for children and adults with disabilities.*”

The Office of Disability Services has brought the Massachusetts housing registry to Nevada through a federal grant. It can be viewed at www.nevadahousingregistry.com. However, making the registry effective will require property owner participation. Massachusetts accomplished this by mandating that every owner of rental properties report to the registry. In Nevada, we are proposing that at least those owners receiving government subsidies or support be compelled to participate. Reporting will likely be done on a monthly basis and will only require property owners to respond to an e-mail. There will be no monetary cost to their participation and the time investment will generally be less than 10 minutes per month.

The Legislative Commission’s Subcommittee to Study the Availability and Inventory of Affordable Housing was created by ACR 11 during the last legislative session. The subcommittee has been looking at housing registry participation and may include it in a bill draft that will also propose funding for housing data collection. However, we believe this issue is important enough for it to stand alone, and that it should not be combined with another

issue that requires an appropriation. Thus, the SPAC asks the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities offer a bill draft on this issue.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 67

SPAC Contact: Jack Mayes

Agency Contact: Sherry Manning

#4. Pass legislation that will require the use of “people first” language in the Nevada Revised Statutes and Nevada Administrative Code when referring to people with disabilities.

Issue Summary:

This recommendation originated with the People First organization and was presented to the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities by Santa Perez. The acceptable language to use in describing people with disabilities has changed over time, and will likely continue to change. The word “crippled” became “handicapped,” and “handicapped” eventually gave way to “disability.” While it is impossible to legislate language preferences, we believe that the person should always be put first when referring to people with disabilities. Instead of “disabled person,” “person with a disability” should be used. Instead of “wheelchair user,” “person who uses a wheelchair” is preferred.

We ask that the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities offer a bill draft to require the use of “people first” language in the Nevada Revised Statutes and Nevada Administrative Code when referring to people with disabilities.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): Not specifically addressed in the strategic plan, but certainly in keeping with the spirit of the plan.

SPAC Contact: Mary Bryant

Agency Contact: Todd Butterworth

#5. Add Traumatic Brain Injury applicants to the reporting requirements under NRS 426.729(1) to help them avoid institutionalization.

Issue Summary:

The Office of Disability Services’ (ODS) Personal Assistance Services program provides home-based care for individuals who do not qualify for other resources, such as Medicaid. Some clients share in the cost on a sliding scale, and services are provided statewide by the St. Mary’s Foundation, on a contract basis. Because the service has focused on serving individuals with more severe physical disabilities, it has inadvertently avoided serving people with mild to moderate Traumatic Brain Injury.

While many of these individuals have relatively minor physical disabilities, their cognitive and memory functions can cause them serious problems. For example, a person might be able to pay their own bills, but they might not remember to pay them. Or, they might recognize a leaky pipe, but they may not understand the need to report it. For some Nevadans, these small problems have spiraled into the loss of a home and a move into a nursing home. With just a few hours of support each week, some of these individuals could continue to live independently.

At the urging of the 2005 legislature, ODS has amended its regulations to allow individuals with TBI to receive limited PAS services, when program funding is available. Objective 48 of the Strategic Plan for People with Disabilities call for the State to *“provide training within personal assistance programs to ensure people with autism, other pervasive developmental disabilities and brain injury (who have a high need for a consistent and predictable environment) will obtain caregivers who understand and are trained in their individual particular characteristics and needs.”*

Objective 86 asks that *“Legislative budget requests and forecasting recognize and include the needs of people with severe disabilities and their families with incomes above Medicaid limits, but unable to afford the critical personal assistance, respite, health care, environmental modifications and medications needed to avoid family disruption, impoverishment, exacerbation of disability and institutionalization.”*

The SPAC believes that individuals with TBI should be added to the reporting under NRS 426.729, for consideration during the budget process. Because there is no requirement that the State fund the service needs of those reported under NRS 426.729, there would be no fiscal impact as a result of this statutory change. It would merely make policymakers aware of the need.

The Office of Disability Services has agreed to include this item in their agency bill, thus the SPAC asks that the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities simply endorse this proposed change in the NRS.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 26, 45, 48, 85, 86, 87

SPAC Contact: Jane Imboden

Agency Contact: Todd Butterworth

RECOMMENDED BUDGET INITIATIVES

#1. Add Autism behavioral services to the MR/ Related Conditions Medicaid waiver.

Issue Summary:

This issue was a top priority for the current biennium but very narrowly failed to garner executive or legislative support. It is the SPAC's number one priority for the upcoming biennium. This policy change will enable Mental

Health and Developmental Services to begin offering desperately needed assistance to children with Autism. Early intervention for many kids with Autism can permanently change their lives, by giving them the skills they need to compensate for their disability. In such cases, this could eliminate the future need for special education services, vocational rehabilitation services, welfare, or Medicaid.

Objective 51 of the Strategic Plan calls for the State to “*develop a Medicaid HCBS Cognitive Impairment Waiver to assure delivery of the complex and costly array of behavioral services needed by people with brain injury, autism, and other pervasive developmental disabilities and mental illness for their unique behavioral and independent living needs.*” This recommendation is a cost-effective means for accomplishing this objective related to those with Autism.

The SPAC asks that the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities urge the governor and the Department of Health and Human Services to prioritize this initiative in their 2008-09 budget.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 25, 51

SPAC Contact: Jan Crandy

Agency Contact: Jane Gruner

#2. Fund Medicaid’s proposals to offer Traumatic Brain Injury services under the Waiver for Independent Nevadans and to provide a rate increase for comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation services for TBI clients.

Issue Summary:

Objective 24 of the Strategic Plan calls for the State to “*identify the service needs of out-of-state residential placements and develop in-state capability to return those residents to Nevada.*” Several Nevadans with Traumatic Brain Injury are unnecessarily forced to live out-of-state in order to receive needed services. This placement is necessary mostly because the State does not pay in-State providers of specialized services the same rate as out-of-state providers. By increasing the rate paid to in-state providers, more Nevadans with TBI will be able to access services locally and to remain in Nevada.

Objective 55 places urgency on “*provid[ing] families who act as primary caregivers with the disability education, training and support services needed to effectively provide care to their family member or significant other without undue physical and/or mental hardship.*” Adult day services provide daytime supervision and support for those individuals with more severe Traumatic Brain Injury. These services enable families who act as in-home caregivers to work during the day and to continue supporting their family member at home. The absence of these services forces families to break up and burdens the State with the cost of full-time institutional care.

The SPAC asks that the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities urge the governor and the Department of Health and Human Services to prioritize these initiatives in their 2008-09 budget.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 24, 25, 36, 39, 51, 55, 63

SPAC Contact: Jane Imboden

Agency Contact: Connie Anderson

#3. Raise the unearned income eligibility limit for the Medicaid buy-in program (HIWA).

Issue Summary:

Objective 52 of the Strategic Plan challenges the State to “*continually expand Nevada’s Medicaid Buy-In Program to equitably provide, by 2008, medical insurance coverage or wraparound to all people with disabilities who, by virtue of becoming employed, have established an income above poverty level, but cannot obtain the health care coverage and services required to terminate reliance on public benefits.*”

The Health Insurance for Work Advancement (HIWA) program enables people with disabilities who want to go back to work to buy-in to the Medicaid program to ensure that they will not lose health insurance coverage in the process of getting a job. In 2004, Governor Guinn recommended a budget for HIWA to serve 608 people in SFY 2007. The Legislatively-approved budget calls for 130 people to be served in SFY 2007.

Unfortunately, the window of eligibility for the program is so small that only 21 people are enrolled. A bill to expand this window of eligibility failed during the past legislative session and, as a result, people who want to work may not be, for fear of losing their insurance. An increase in the window of eligibility would ultimately save more than it costs by reducing people’s need for public services and increasing their ability to pay income taxes and contribute to the economy.

The SPAC has two recommendations related to HIWA and asks that the Legislative Committee offer their support for these actions. First, we ask that DHHS increase the unearned income limit as soon as possible to \$899 per month, or whatever level is necessary, to get the caseload count to 130 individuals by the end of the biennium, as projected during the 2005 Legislature. In preparing the SFY 2008-09 budget we ask, at a minimum, that funding be restored to the amount requested in the Governor’s 2006-07 budget, adjusted for population and cost increases. To get there we believe the unearned income limit should initially be raised to at least 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (\$1,225 a month).

The SPAC asks that the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities urge the governor and the Department of Health and Human Services to address these initiatives.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 52, 86

SPAC Contact: Jon Sasser

Agency Contact: Connie Anderson

#4. Fund Positive Behavior Supports technical assistance for agencies serving individuals with behavioral issues.

Issue Summary:

Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) is a service philosophy that has shown to provide better results than negative interventions. The University of Nevada and the Department of Health and Human Services have partnered to form a program called PBS Nevada, which provides education and technical assistance to any public or private agency wanting to implement PBS strategies. This program has operated on a minimal budget and has subsisted mostly on support from the Fund for a Healthy Nevada. However, because PBS is mandated in NRS and because it is a key strategy for Olmstead compliance, we urge permanent general fund support for PBS Nevada and at least \$540,000 in annual funding during the 2008-09 biennium.

Objective 38 in the Strategic Plan for People with Disabilities calls for the state to *“provide permanent funding for the state’s Positive Behavioral Supports Network at a level that, at a minimum, will support adequate training and service delivery to 1,500 families...”*

The SPAC asks that the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities urge the governor and the Department of Health and Human Services to prioritize this initiative in their 2008-09 budget.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 24, 38, 39, 63

SPAC Contact: Jack Mayes

Agency Contact: Don Jackson

#5. Fund Nevada’s 2-1-1 telephone system.

Issue Summary:

Objective 65 of the Strategic plan proposes to, *“in collaboration with Nevada counties and United Way organizations, establish and fund a 2-1-1 universal access line with a supplementary No Wrong Door website and community level call centers providing information, referral and resolution assistance.”*

An almost universal need in all social service programs is a single point of access for information on the complicated array of available services. With a

fully functioning 2-1-1 system, anyone in Nevada will be able to dial 2-1-1 on their telephone and receive help finding the assistance or information they need. How often do we say to one another, “I didn’t know that program existed” or “who do I call to access those services”? 2-1-1 can address these issues for every public and private social service in Nevada.

2-1-1 received a 2005 legislative appropriation for a pilot project and it is available in the metropolitan areas of the state. But 2-1-1 needs a greater commitment from the State to be available statewide and to become a viable ongoing program. This being said, the State should only be one of many partners supporting 2-1-1.

The SPAC asks that the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities encourage the governor to permanently fund a percentage of the 2-1-1 budget through the state general fund.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 56, 65, 87

SPAC Contact: Jack Mayes

Agency Contact: Mary Liveratti

#6. Utilize entire federal allotment for Vocational Rehabilitation.

Issue Summary:

Vocational Rehabilitation has historically experienced difficulties in retention and recruitment of its rehabilitation counselor positions, which in turn have significantly limited the bureau's ability to fully utilize its Federal Section 110 funding. In response, the Rehabilitation Division implemented several new recruiting strategies, and has made significant progress toward minimizing vacancies.

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) allocates Section 110 funding based on disability population demographics. For the current federal year (October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006 – FY2006) RSA allocated \$3 million more to Nevada than the Rehabilitation Division was able to match. At the required match ratio, an increase of approximately \$750,000 in State funding would be required to match Nevada’s FY2006 Section 110 allotment. Preliminary planning targets issued by RSA indicate that Nevada’s allocation will be increasing by 7.5% per year.

Objective 77 of the Strategic Plan calls for the SPAC to “*Monitor and report to each session of the legislature matched funding returned to the federal government.*” The SPAC asks that the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities urge the governor and the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation to prioritize this match funding in their 2008-09 budget.

Relevant SPAC Objective(s): 76, 77

SPAC Contact: Jack Mayes

Agency Contact: Mick Coleman

Conclusion

We appreciate the opportunity to serve the State and the disability community in this very worthwhile endeavor. The Olmstead Decision was a landmark case for people with disabilities. Nevada should take pride in its proactive response to the challenges offered by the US Supreme Court, and in the excellent Strategic Plan we are implementing in pursuit of Olmstead ideals.

We would especially like to thank: Governor Guinn, who is the only governor in recent memory to truly prioritize disability issues; Senator Cegavske and the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities, who have graciously given voice to the disability community; Mike Willden and the many staff of the Department of Health and Human Services who have worked cooperatively as our partners in the Strategic Plan for People with Disabilities; the Office of Disability Services for staffing our committee and working hard to coordinate our many initiatives; and, the many other State and private agencies that have been so supportive of the process.